

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 4, 18 stand canceled.

Claim 10 has been amended to correct its dependency, in accordance with the Examiner's helpful comment which is noted with appreciation.

5 The Amendment leaves claims 1-3, 5-17, 19-22 pending.

The claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the disclosure in the present application drawing figures 1 and 2 in view of Morris et al U.S. Patent 5,538,349. The claims have been amended to further distinguish the invention over the prior art, and consideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

10 Morris et al '349 has been applied for showing a gear member 27 having an axis of rotation, a generally cylindrical member 35 having a slot 77, and a retaining member 83 having a protuberance 89 shaped to pass through the slot 77 when aligned, and providing axial retention when not aligned. As noted at column 5, lines 56+, in order to assemble the bearing retainer 83 within the opening 75 of the wall portion 35, the retainer should be placed in the orientation
15 shown in Fig. 5, but coaxial with the opening 75, such that the bayonets 89 and 91 are aligned respectively with the recesses 77 and 79. The bearing assembly 83 is then assembled by moving it forwardly (leftwardly in Fig. 2) such that the bayonets 89 and 91 pass through the recesses 77 and 79, until the bearing retainer 83 is in the axial position shown in Fig. 2, whereafter bearing retainer 83 is rotated from the position shown in Fig. 5 to the position shown in Fig. 3.

20 Claim 1 has been amended to require a bearing assembly (30) engaged between the gear member (10) and the generally cylindrical member (20) and permitting rotation of the retainer member (100) about the axis (40) relative to the generally cylindrical member (20). In contrast, in Morris et al '349, retaining member 83 does not rotate relative to generally cylindrical member 35. To the contrary, Morris et al '349 teaches that *it is necessary to provide some sort*
25 *of "anti-rotation" arrangement to prevent rotation of the bearing retainer 83 relative to the wall portion 35*, column 6, lines 21-23. Thus, even if Morris et al '349 is combined with the prior art of present application drawing figures 1 and 2, there is still no suggestion, absent the present Applicant's disclosure, to both: a) provide the noted retaining member (100); and b) also provide rotation between such retaining member (100) and the generally cylindrical member
30 (20). Such suggestion cannot come from Morris et al '349 because it teaches just the opposite, namely an anti-rotation arrangement to prevent rotation of bearing retainer 83 relative to wall

portion 35. The use of a bearing assembly permitting relative rotation between bearing retainer member 83 and cylindrical member wall portion 35 at interface 75 therebetween would be contrary to the stated necessity in Morris et al '349 of providing an "anti-rotation" arrangement to prevent rotation between members 83 and 35. Accordingly, even if Morris et al '349 is combined with the prior art of present application drawing figures 1 and 2, the only suggestion to diverge oppositely from the teachings of Morris et al '349 is found in the present invention. Such opposite divergence from the teachings of a reference would require obliterational modification of such teachings. It is respectfully submitted that opposite divergence from and obliterational modification of the teachings of a reference are clearly probative of non-obviousness. Consideration and allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

The remaining independent claims have been amended comparably to claim 1, and define further combinations which are believed allowable. Respective dependent claims are believed allowable for the reasons noted above, and define further sub-combinations which are believed allowable.

Claim 5 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 5 requires that the thrust bearing (12) have a first axial face axially facing and engaging the gear member (10), and have a second distally oppositely facing axial face axially facing and engaging the generally cylindrical member (20). This is not present in Morris et al '349, nor motivated thereby, including in combination with the prior art of present application drawing figures 1 and 2. Claim 20 has been comparably amended.

Claim 21 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 21 defines a sub-combination requiring that the retaining member (100) and the first protuberance (110) are fixed to the gear member (10). In contrast, in Morris et al '349, retaining member 83 and protuberance 89 are not fixed to gear member 27.

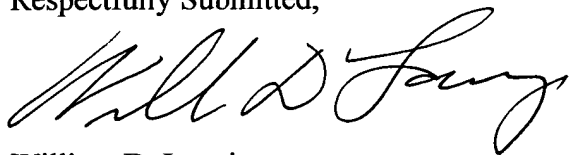
Claim 22 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 22 defines a sub-combination requiring that the bearing assembly (30) extend axially to an axial end, and that the protuberance (110) and the slot (84) extend along a radial projection bridging between the generally cylindrical member (20) and the retaining member (100) axially beyond the noted axial end of the bearing assembly (30), and that the noted radial bridging projection be axially aligned with the bearing assembly (30) and axially facing and axially spaced from the noted axial end of the bearing assembly (30). This is not taught nor

suggested in Morris et al '349 including in combination with the prior art of present application drawing figures 1 and 2.

It is believed that this application is in condition for allowance with claims 1-3, 5-17, 19-22, and such action is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully Submitted,



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